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Fulbright Deplores U. S. Prestige Loss

Lays Change In Allies to U-2 Incident

By the Associated Press

Senator Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas, said today United States prestige has reached a new low as a result of "bumbling and fumbling" in the U-2 spy plane incident.

Senator Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told the Senate the U-2 incident and United States handling of it "were the immediate cause of the collapse" of the Paris summit conference shortly after the plane was brought down over Russia.

He said it "was a serious lack of judgment" to order the May 1 flight. The administration's own testimony before his committee, Senator Fulbright said, raised a question of whether the information sought on the flight was as important as represented.

Hits "Cover Story"

"There is ground here for the conclusion that the alleged extraordinary importance of this information is the administration's cover story for its own costly mistake," Senator Fulbright said in a prepared speech.

He spoke in connection with the submission to the Senate of a much more moderate report approved by a majority of his committee, which held closed-door hearings on the incident.

Speaking with what he called "a heavy heart with some regret," Senator Fulbright said that to say Soviet Premier Khrushchev wrote the pact-mit talks, since "he did," contributed little to understanding the chain of events.

Reason for Khrushchev Action

"The essential point is that the U-2 was the reason he did," Senator Fulbright added. He said both Secretary of Defense Gates and Secretary of State Herter agreed the spy plane was the tool Mr. Khrushchev used.

"This is not essentially different from saying he used it as a crowbar and sledgehammer," Senator Fulbright declared.

This was a reference to a statement on the incident by Adlai E. Stevenson, twice the Democratic presidential candidate and a possible nominee this year. The comment was widely attacked by Republicans.

Senator Fulbright added:

"One might even go further and say that we forced Khrushchev to wreck the conference by our own ineptness."

Senator Fulbright said that "short of the madness of preventive war," he could think

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of nothing more serious than to restore trust in the Soviet Union.

Wide-Ranging Criticism

Senator Fulbright, in the course of his wide-ranging criticism of the administration, including President Eisenhower's acceptance of personal responsibility for spy flights, said the flights should have been suspended around the middle of April, perhaps after the flight of April 9.

He said that the first cover statements, that the plane was on a weather mission, "made us look ridiculous when the full extent of Soviet knowledge was revealed."

"The gravest mistake was made when the President assumed responsibility for the flight," Senator Fulbright continued.

"Finally, after the truth became known, the State Department and the White House assumed a self-righteous attitude which further complicated our situation in Paris."

He argued that the United States put Khrushchev in a "quite unacceptable position" and said:

"Although another mistake would have most likely been made more temperate in his choice of language, it is difficult to see how anyone could have been expected to act substantially different from the way

Chairman Khrushchev acted under the circumstances which confronted him in Paris."

U-2 in Reserve

Senator Fulbright added that if a Soviet counterpart of the U-2 had come down over Kansas City May 1 it would have "brought speeches in the Senate powerful enough to rock the Capitol dome with denunciations of the perfidy of the Soviets on the eve of the summit conference and with denunciations that the President not go to Paris."

He said it was "quite intolerable" to attempt to make it appear the flights were the Soviets' own fault because they are secretive.

Senator Fulbright said the "unfortunate series of blunders" has resulted in a "loss of confidence, worldwide, in the United States" even though assumed a self-righteous attitude which further complicated our situation in Paris.

"This loss of confidence, he said, had to do with faith in American ability to coordinate government machinery."

"Lack of confidence leads to neutralism and I dare say this was a contributing factor to the riots in Japan protesting our new treaty," Senator Fulbright said.